

C
W 75 m n J

No. 4

BULLETIN

of the

THE LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

RIVER FALLS STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

December, Nineteen - nineteen

THE TEACHER PROBLEM A NATIONAL EMERGENCY

The schools of the New America will need the keenest, cleanest, most intelligent young men and women from every community in every state. National intelligence demands an army of better paid, more competent teachers.

Entered as second class matter March 23, 1919 at the post office at River Falls, Wisconsin, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Published quarterly by the Board of Regents of Normal Schools.

WISCONSIN FACES A SHORTAGE OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

The insistent demands for teachers in the elementary schools this fall led us to wonder if we were correct in assuming that this shortage is general. Replies to eighty letters sent to city superintendents, without exception, confirmed this conclusion. Furthermore, a letter from the State Department of Education says—"There is a very serious shortage of capable and well equipped teachers. The shortage promises to be even worse next year." Secretary Crabtree of the N. E. A., after a nation wide investigation, reports as follows—"More than 100,000 teaching positions in the United States are either without teachers or else supplied with teachers who are admittedly unqualified to teach."

Anticipating an even greater shortage of teachers next year a letter was sent to twenty-five normal schools in Wisconsin and surrounding states asking about the prospective supply of teachers. Replies to these letters show that the number of teachers to be graduated from these schools in 1920 will be 14 per cent less than in 1919. Also a statement from Secretary Crabtree covering a report from all the normal schools in the United States shows a total enrollment of 36,180 for September 1919 as against 38,027 for the same period in 1918, and 48,246 for 1916—a falling off, in the chief source of supply, of 25 per cent since 1916.

In as much as practically all normal school graduates find employment in the city schools it might be assumed that this dearth of teachers would not be felt in the rural districts, but such is not the case. The shortage here is even more alarming. Many rural schools in all parts of the United States are unable to secure teachers, even of the emergency species, notwithstanding the fact that they offer larger salaries than heretofore paid to the best teachers. Many county superintendents are asking, "Where are the rural teachers to come from?"

WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

Why this scarcity of teachers? Why is there prospect of still greater shortage in the immediate future? With a single exception the city superintendents who answered our letter of inquiry say that the chief cause of a falling off in the supply of elementary teachers is an economic cause. During the war period the industries have called for an increased number of workers. These industries have paid good salaries while tardy school boards have offered the same old meagre rewards for service. It is not surprising that young men and women should seek positions that are more remunerative than teaching positions have been.

The salaries heretofore paid have not been sufficiently attractive to induce young people to prepare for teaching as a career. Especially is this true in elementary schools. Furthermore many of the more ambitious elementary teachers have been drawn into high schools and special positions in other schools by the higher salaries paid there, and by the social advantages which often come to the teacher in such schools.

Some would blame the normal schools for not turning out an adequate supply of elementary teachers. The Normal schools can turn out no more than come to them for training. These schools are eager to increase the supply of elementary teachers. For years these schools have been working for higher standards and higher salaries for their graduates. They do not claim that the present upward movement of salaries is wholly due to their efforts, but in that movement they have played no small part. Competition with the industries has been the chief factor in compelling many communities to pay their teachers more ample salaries.

THE MORE PROMISING OUTLOOK

Salaries are really increasing. Boards of education are realizing as never before that they must increase their budgets in order to man their schools. Those communities which are paying good salaries are getting the more competent teachers. That is as it should be. The members of the class of 1919 who accepted grade positions, and positions in the rural schools are receiving salaries 25 per cent. higher than were paid to those who went out from this school in 1918. The salaries offered our graduates at this time indicate that the class of 1920 will receive from \$90 to \$100 for work in the elementary schools. Graduates of the three year course for high school teachers and departmental teachers will of course receive more than that.

THE NEW NEEDS.

In view of these salient facts and carefully framed opinions of leading educators need we urge that the future welfare of our public schools is at stake? But above and beyond that the welfare of America is at stake. We live in a critical time. The years ahead are to be critical years. We are facing problems more numerous and more complex than those faced by any previous generation of Americans. Many of these problems will confront the children who are now in school. The solution of these problems and the consequent safety of America do not lie in Bolshevism. The safe, sane solution must come at the hands of intelligent, prepared citizens who are imbued with the spirit of the fathers of this country and who believe in American ideals.

We are a nation of many peoples from many lands. Whether or not we are to become a nation of people who are one-hundred per cent. American depends primarily upon our public schools. Whether illiteracy is to decrease or not lies with the public schools. Illiteracy in America? We do not like to admit it, do we? Yet of the fine picked men in our army in the Great War one out of every ten was unable to read and write. It is safe to say that fifty per cent. of our people are unable to vote and act with safe intelligence upon the great public questions confronting us in state and nation.

Yet in view of all this the public schools are not only suffering from incompetent teachers and underpaid teachers, but are facing the alarming shortage of teachers of any description. The scores of men and women in Wisconsin and neighboring states who answered our letters are not alarmists. They are people of judgement and vision. They see needs now and anticipate future needs. They are trained educators and without exception they agree that Wisconsin and neighboring states face an alarming shortage of teachers next year and beyond. They agree that the danger of having our schools supplied with incompetent, immature people is not an imaginary one. It is a real danger. The children in too many Wisconsin communities even now are suffering from incompetent, half-prepared instruction.

A CALL TO THE COLORS.

America must solve this problem. Wisconsin must and will take a leading part in this great emergency. The one great purpose of the normal school is to train elementary teachers for the service of the state. The River Falls Normal School, which places this bulletin in your hands stands ready to do its part. The faculty of this institution and its board of regents have no hesitancy in urging young men and young women, with a talent for teaching, to enter some normal school and help solve this America's greatest need. Will you do your part to help whip the "Hum," illiteracy, at

home by training for the work of teaching? Towns, villages and cities call for teachers. Wisconsin calls for them. The Nation calls for them. They call for the best blood of this generation. We pass the call on to you.

The following courses are maintained at the River Falls Normal school:

1. A course for teachers of primary grades.
2. A course for teachers of grammar grades.
3. Three courses for teachers of rural schools.
4. A course for principals and supervisors.
5. A course for teachers of agriculture.
6. A three-year course for teachers of special subjects in graded and high schools.



3 0112 062239949

